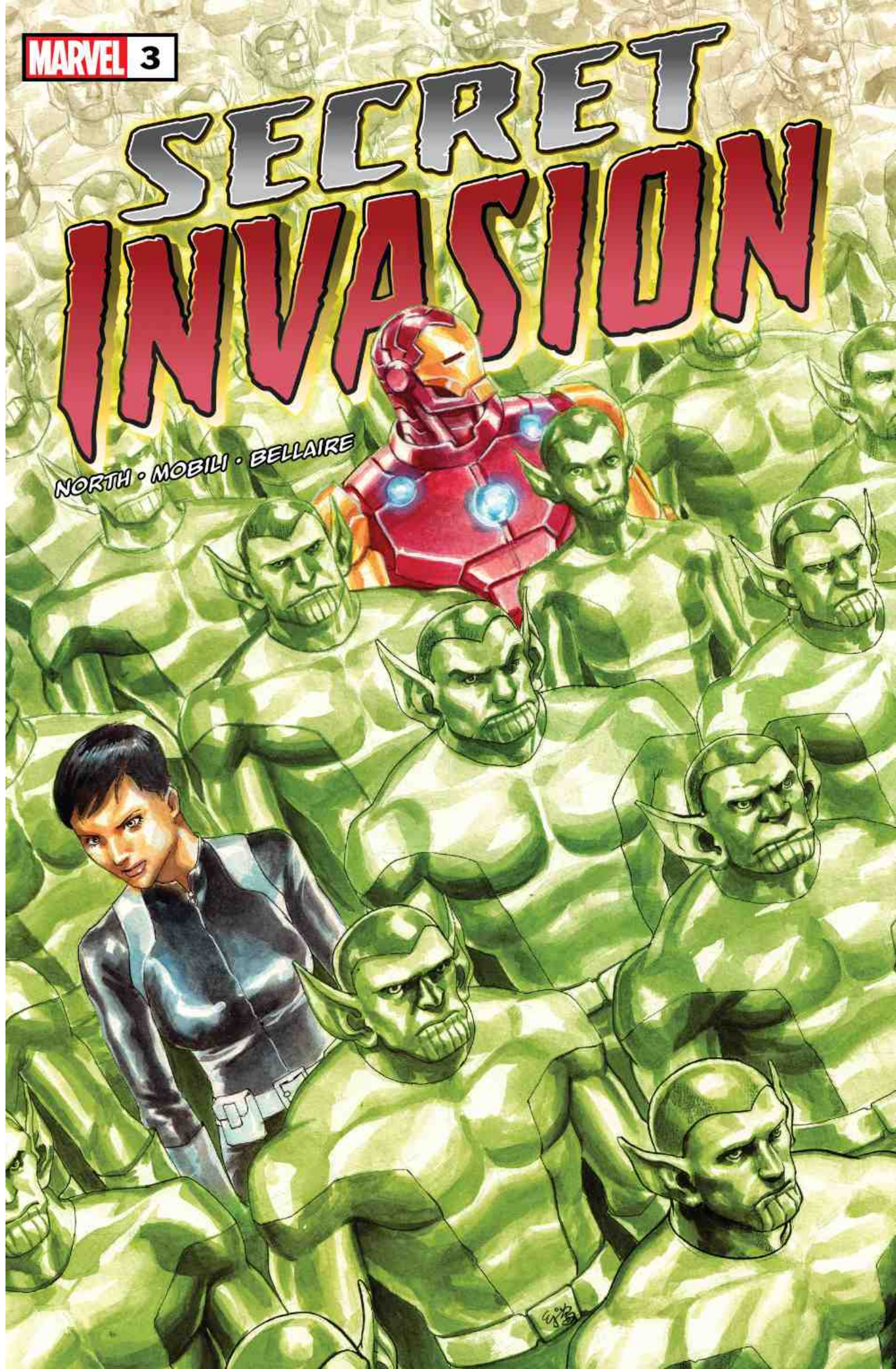


MARVEL 3

SECRET INVASION

NORTH • MOBILI • BELLAIRE



C.I.A. agent Maria Hill exposed a shape-shifting alien Skrull masquerading as her former colleague Nick Fury. After capturing and interrogating the Skrull agent, Maria gathered a group of Earth's heroes to warn them of the imminent invasion and test their blood. But what she didn't detect is that Tony Stark, A.K.A. Iron Man, had also been replaced by a Skrull--one working in conjunction with...Tony Stark?!

SECRET INVASION

*"Now I Know
You're Human"*

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TONY.

MARIA,
LISTEN, I HAVE
SOMETHING FOR
YOU THAT'S TOO
SENSITIVE EVEN
FOR SECURE
CHANNELS.

I WISH
I COULD SAY
THAT WAS
SUSPICIOUS.

I KNOW
IT'S A BIT OF A
COMMUTE FROM
LANGLEY, BUT CAN
YOU COME BY THE
BROWNSTONE
TONIGHT?



ACTUALLY,
IT'S NOT AS BAD
AS YOU THINK. CAN
I PUT YOU ON HOLD
FOR A SECOND,
TONY?

SURE
THING.



PETE, I'LL BE
OUT OF THE OFFICE
FOR A BIT, BUT I'LL
CHECK IN WITHIN A FEW
HOURS. TRACKER'S
LIVE.

UNDERSTOOD,
MA'AM.



STILL
THERE,
TONY?

YEP.

GREAT.
I PUT YOU ON
EARPIECE.



YOU MAY
WANT TO TURN
YOUR VOLUME
DOWN.



NEW YORK CITY.

TEN THOUSAND METERS UP.

IT'S
ABOUT
TO GET
LOUD.



TELL ME
YOU'RE NOT
SKYDIVING. I
COULD'VE SENT
A **SUIT** TO--

US POOR
FOLKS IN THE
C.I.A. MUDDLE BY
SOMEHOW.

WELL, I
APPRECIATE
YOU MAKING
THE TIME.

NOTHING TO
THANK ME FOR.
THIS IS ME DOING
MY JOB.

AND IT'S BEEN
MY EXPERIENCE
THAT BAD THINGS
START IN NEW YORK,
TONY, THEN **RADIATE**
OUT TO THE REST
OF US.

GREATEST
CITY IN THE
WORLD.

SHOOMPH

RIGHT.



MARIA
ALWAYS A
PLEASURE,
NEVER A
CHORE.

NOPE.
NOT UNTIL
A BLOOD
TEST.



BEFORE
EVERY
MEETING, TONY.
YOU **KNOW**
THAT.

OR AT
LEAST, YOU
WOULD
KNOW...



...IF YOU WEREN'T
A **SKRULL**.

HEH. YOU
WOUND ME.
MACHINE'S JUST
DOWNSTAIRS.



AFTER
YOU.

NO,
AFTER
YOU.



I INSIST.



I'M GONNA HAVE A **PORT** IMPLANTED IN MY CHEST IF WE KEEP THESE BLOOD TESTS UP MUCH LONGER.

SURPRISED YOU DON'T HAVE ONE ALREADY.



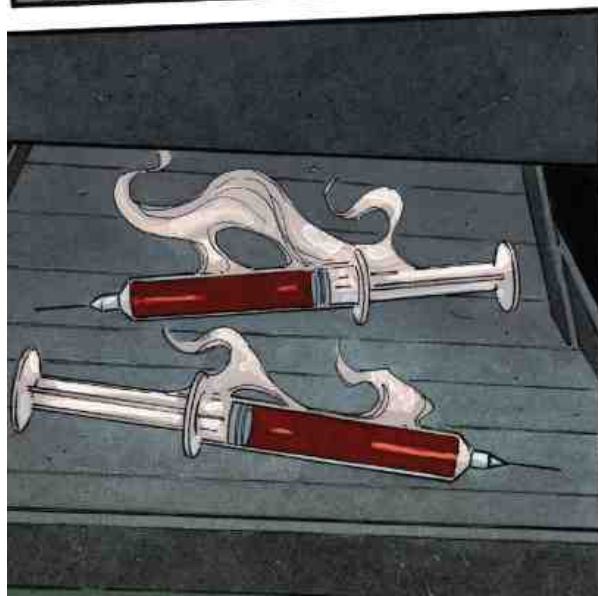
YOU COULD PUT IT RIGHT BELOW THE ARC REACTOR--

I'VE NEVER KEPT A REACTOR IN MY CHEST BEF--

--AND **JUUUST** ABOVE THE USB SLOT.



HARDY HAR.



THERE. **NOW** DO YOU TRUST ME?

OH, **ABSOLUTELY** NOT.

NOW I JUST KNOW YOU'RE **HUMAN**.



SO, WHAT IS IT YOU WANTED TO DISCUSS, TONY?

WELL, MARIA, IT'S ACTUALLY MORE OF A--HMM.

CALL IT...A "CONFESSION."
THAT'S YOUR CUE, EVERYONE.

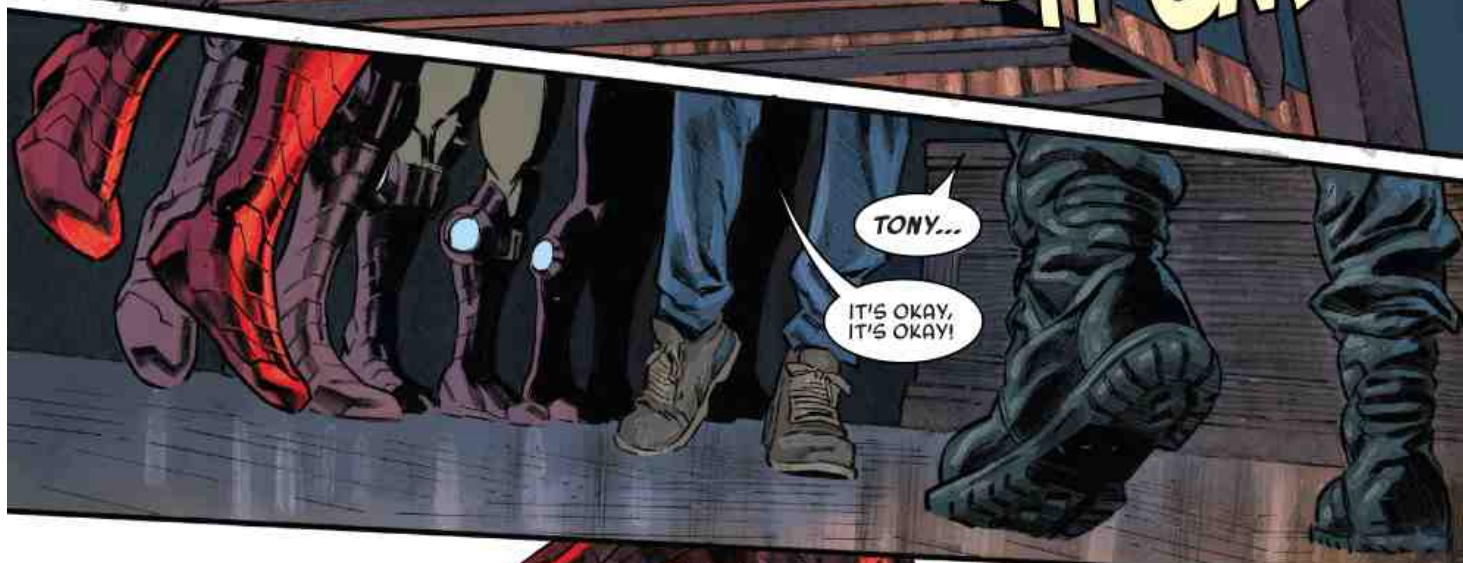


SHOOM

SHOOM

SHOOM

SHOOM



TONY...

IT'S OKAY, IT'S OKAY!



I PROMISE YOU, MARIA...







"NEVER TRUST
A SKRULL.' I'D
SAID IT BEFORE.

"AND TO BE FAIR,
THE ONES I'D
FOUGHT HAD NEVER
GIVEN ME A REASON
NOT TO SAY IT.



"YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I
DO THAT WHEN YOU'RE AT
WAR, YOU DON'T LOOK
FOR SHADES OF GRAY.

"I SAW SKRULLS AS A
UNIFORM SPECIES.
UNDIFFERENTIATED.



"BUT THEY'RE
ALL JUST PEOPLE.

"PEOPLE LIKE
US, MARIA.



"DOREEN HELPED ME
NOT JUST *SEE* MY
OWN PREJUDICE--

"--NEVER THE
EASIEST THING
TO LOOK AT,
INCIDENTALLY--

"--BUT ALSO
TO *SEE*
PAST IT.

"G'ILLIAN HAD A LOT TO OFFER OUR WORLD. ANY WORLD."

"SHE JUST NEEDED SOME HELP."



"SO, WHATEVER, I GAVE HER A JOB AT STARK UNLIMITED."



"AND A FEW MONTHS BACK, I REALIZED NO MATTER WHERE G'ILLIAN--OR GILLIAN, AS SHE NOW PREFERRED--HAD COME FROM..."



"I TRUST HER."

"AND WHEN RECENT EVENTS MADE IT **VERY** CLEAR THAT HAVING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCES AUTONOMOUSLY RUNNING AROUND IN MY SUITS **MAYBE** WASN'T THE BEST IDEA..."



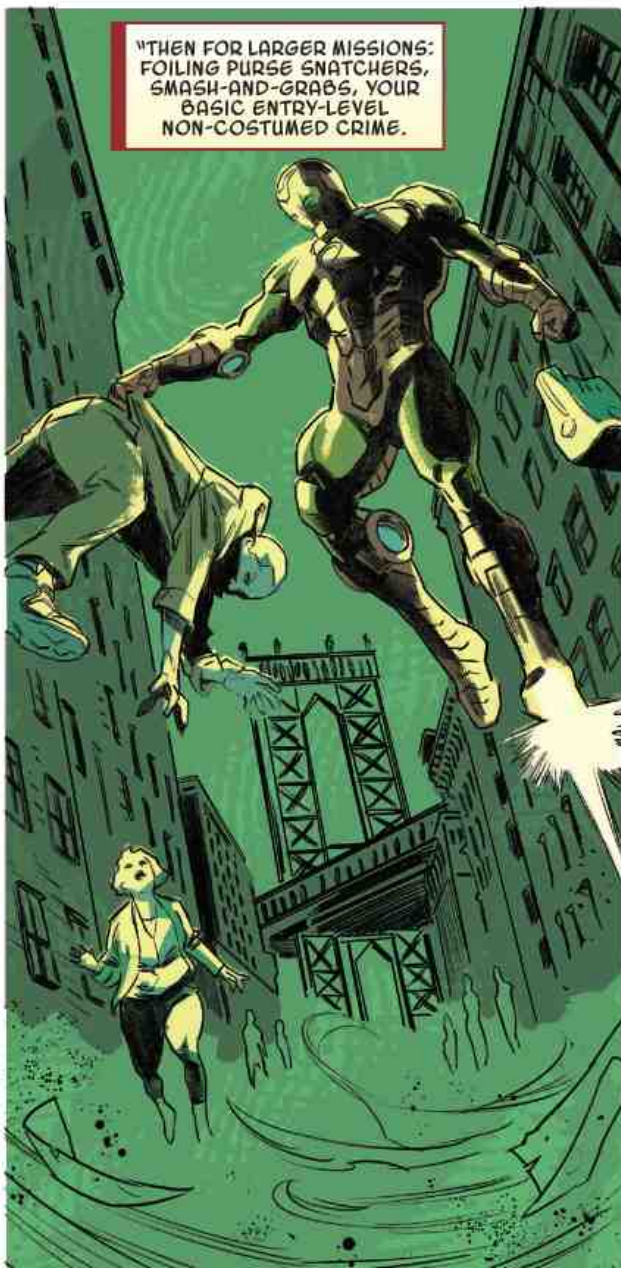


"...IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT I **ALREADY** HAD THE PERFECT BACKUP PILOT, READY TO GO.



"I BEGAN BY LETTING GILLIAN TAKE OUT A SUIT ON CERTAIN LOW-STAKES MISSIONS.

"CATS IN TREES, DIRECTING TRAFFIC, THAT SORT OF THING.



"THEN FOR LARGER MISSIONS: FOILING PURSE SNATCHERS, SMASH-AND-GRABS, YOUR BASIC ENTRY-LEVEL NON-COSTUMED CRIME.



"**EVERYTHING** WAS SUPERVISED, LOGGED, SCRUTINIZED.



"I HAD OVERRIDES TO SHUT DOWN THE SUITS IF NECESSARY, BUT I NEVER HAD TO.

"THE SKRULL--
GILLIAN--WAS
DOING GOOD
WORK.



"I ENLISTED MORE SKRULL RECRUITS FOR LARGER MISSIONS: FIRE RESCUE, D-TIER VILLAINS AND THE LIKE."

"GOING OFF TO SPACE MEANT I NO LONGER HAD TO LEAVE EARTH UNDEFENDED."



LESS DEFENDED. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

NBODY IS CRITICIZING YOUR GOOD WORK HERE, OKAY?



"OBVIOUSLY, I WAS STILL THERE FOR THE IMPORTANT STUFF. AVENGERS BUSINESS WAS **ALL ME**."

"...EXCEPT FOR SOME--**SOME**--OF THE MORE TEDIOUS MEETINGS."

"BUT EVEN THEN, I WAS LISTENING IN!"



THIS IS A **SUCCESS** STORY, MARIA. IRON MAN ONLY DOES WHAT **TONY STARK** CAN. BUT MULTIPLE IRON **MEN** CAN FUNCTION AT A WHOLE OTHER LEVEL.

I'VE TAKEN DOREEN'S ADVICE AND DONE **MORE** WITH IT THAN ANYONE WOULD'VE THOUGHT **POSSIBLE**.



"BECAUSE, OF COURSE, THE ADVANTAGE SKRULLS HAVE IS THEY CAN **BE** ME UNDER THAT SUIT."

"COSTUMED CRIMINALS ARE A SUPERSTITIOUS AND COWARDLY LOT, AND I HAVE THEM GOOD AND PROPER AFRAID OF **STARK**."



EVERYTHING
MR. STARK'S SAID IS
TRUE, MS. HILL. BUT
THERE'S MORE.

I'M GILLIAN,
AND YOU SHOULD
KNOW THAT I'M NOT
AN **ORDINARY**
SKRULL.



I'M A **MUTANT**.
I CAN CHANGE MORE
THAN THE OTHERS,
I CAN GET BIGGER
AND--

I DON'T
CARE ABOUT
THAT. AND YOU'VE
COME CLOSE
ENOUGH.

LET'S
SAY I BELIEVE
YOU. JUST FOR
THE SAKE OF
ARGUMENT.

THAT STILL
LEAVES A
PRETTY OBVIOUS
QUESTION.



TONY STARK,
ARE YOU
INSANE?!





YOU'VE BEEN **USING** SKRULLS ON **EARTH**, EXPOSING THEM TO GOD KNOWS HOW MUCH **SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE**, AND--

NOT **USING**, MARIA! **EMPLOYING**. AND WITH THEIR SUBCUTANEOUS BLOOD PACKS, THEY--

THEIR **WHAT?!**



WHAT THE **HELL**, TONY?! YOU HAD THEM **CHEATING** OUR BLOOD TESTS BEFORE I EVEN **INVENTED** THEM?!

MARIA, I MERELY **FORESAW** THE POSSIBILITY OF THEM BEING **SUSPECTED**, WHICH --

--WHICH **WAS** OUR **ONLY** WAY OF **DETECTING** THEM!



OKAY, **YES**, FAIR POINT. MAYBE THAT ONE'S ON ME.

UNBELIEVABLE.



I WAS TRYING TO **PROTECT** THEM! IF ANY OF THEM GOT **CAUGHT**, THEY COULD BE **KILLED**.

THIS IS **COMPLETELY** UNACCEPTABLE.



MARIA, AGAIN, I **APOLOGIZE**, BUT YOU HAVE TO SEE THE **GOOD** I WAS DOING HERE.

ACTUALLY...



...I DON'T HAVE TO SEE A DAMNED THING.

MARIA, PLEASE, YOU--



SMACK!

ARRGH!



GAH!

KRAK!



STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE.

MARIA! WHAT THE HELL?!

MOVE AND YOU DIE, TONY. AND YOU KNOW I'LL DO IT.

OUTSIDE THAT IRON, TONY, YOU'RE JUST A MAN.

OR AT LEAST, YOU **PRETEND** TO BE.



ARRGH!



GAH!
MAH
TONG!

NO ROOM
FOR A BLOOD
PACK IN
THERE.

AND NO
REASON FOR YOU
TO SUSPECT YOU'D
EVER **NEED** ONE
EITHER.



THIS IS
YOUR **ACTUAL**
BLOOD...



...ANTHONY
STARK.

YES,
MARIA.

GOD, MY
TONGUE IS
KILLING
ME.





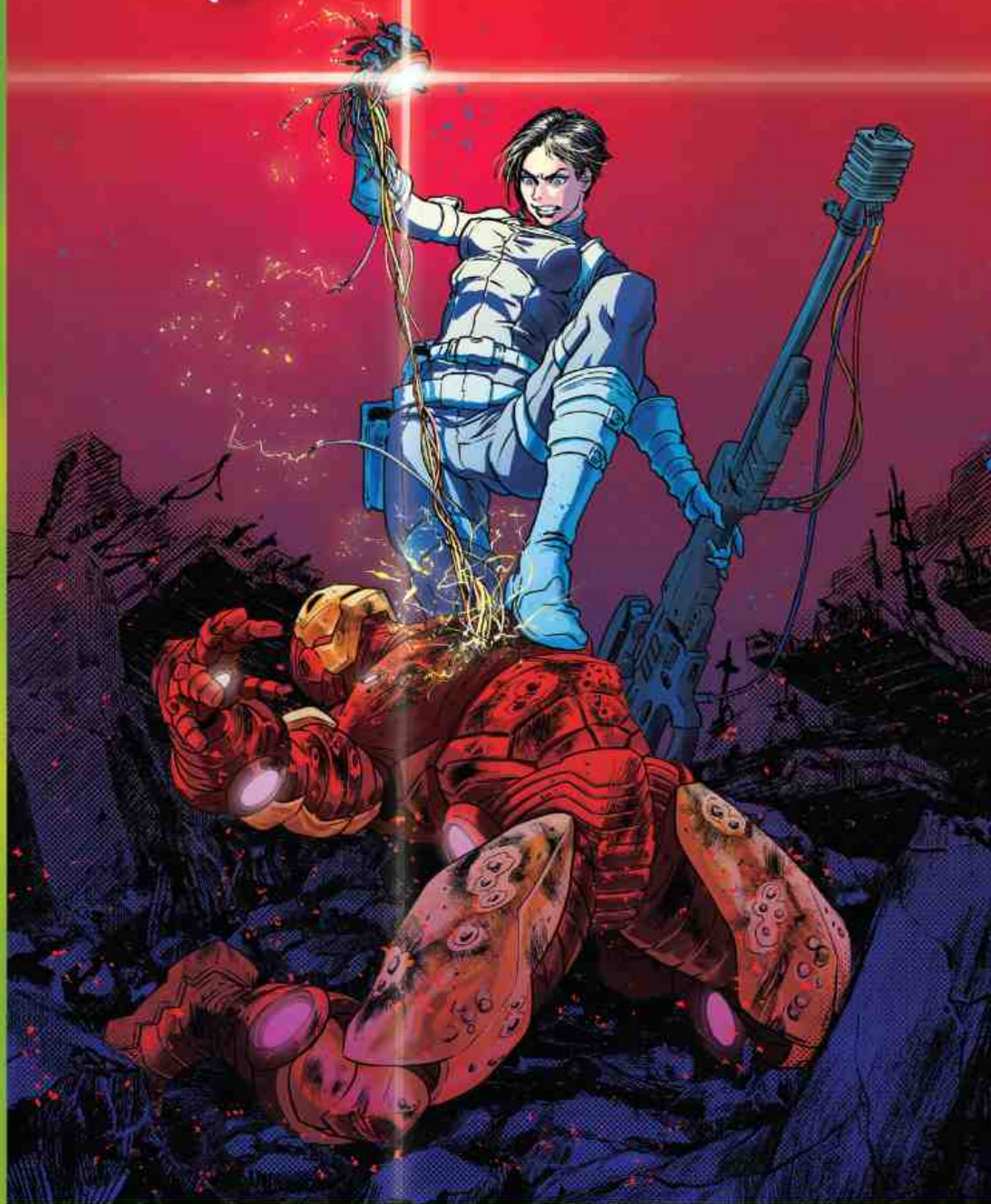
NO.

BANG!
BANG! BANG!

T
TO BE
CONTINUED!

NEXT:

SECRET INVASION #4



Maria Hill has made her call about the Skrulls--and now all the dominoes will fall according to her design. But Tony Stark disagrees with her decision...so Iron Man is going rogue!

